R E P O R T R E S U M E S

ED 011 911 UD 003 760

I.S. 201--AN EDUCATIONAL LANDMARK.

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EDRS PRICE MF-$0.09 HC-$0.64 16P.

DESCRIPTORS- COMMUNITY ACTION, *SCHOOL COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIP, COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT, *COMMUNITY INFLUENCE, *SCHOOL SEGREGATION, PERSONNEL SELECTION, PRINCIPALS, *EDUCATIONAL QUALITY, PARENT ATTITUDES, BOARD OF EDUCATION ROLE, BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY, *DECENTRALIZATION, EDUCATIONAL POLICY, URBAN SCHOOLS, PARENTS, COMMUNITY SCHOOLS, SCHOOL BOYCOTTS, NEW YORK CITY, EAST HARLEM

CONTROVERSY OVER NEW YORK CITY'S INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL 201 RAISED SOME EDUCATIONAL ISSUES RELEVANT TO ALL SCHOOL CHILDREN AS WELL AS TO THE SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED. CONVINCED THAT THE SCHOOL WOULD PROVIDE NEITHER INTEGRATION NOR QUALITY EDUCATION, SOME GHETTO PARENTS SOUGHT "QUALITY SEGREGATED EDUCATION," BASIC TO WHICH WAS COMMUNITY CONTROL OVER EDUCATIONAL POLICY. JOINT RESPONSIBILITY WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION FOR ALL ASPECTS OF SCHOOL POLICY WOULD, THEY MAINTAINED, GIVE GHETTO PARENTS POWER COMPARABLE TO THAT OF WHITE MIDDLE CLASS PARENTS. SUCH POWER, PROBABLY NOT EXERCISED BY ANY URBAN PARENTS, WOULD NOT JEOPARDIZE PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS BECAUSE THE BOARD WOULD RETAIN JOINT AUTHORITY, AND THE PRESSURES OF FUNDING AND ACCREDITATION AGENCIES WOULD PERSIST. OPPOSED BY NEARLY ALL CITY-WIDE EDUCATIONAL POWER GROUPS, THE DISSIDENTS BECAME A NEIGHBORHOOD PRESSURE GROUP AND PRESSED THEIR DEMAND--UNCONTROVERSIAL PER SE--FOR A BLACK PRINCIPAL AFTER A COMPETENT WHITE PRINCIPAL HAD BEEN APPOINTED. DEFEATED IN AN INITIAL BOYCOTT, THE GROUP SEEMS TO BE GENERALIZING ITS PROTEST TO OTHER NEIGHBORHOODS TO COMPETE WITH THE CITY-WIDE GROUPS WHICH DEFEATED THEM. FRAUGHT WITH DANGERS (CHIEFLY THOSE WHICH WEAKEN THE PRESSURE FOR INTEGRATION), THE STRATEGY OF QUALITY SEGREGATED EDUCATION THROUGH COMMUNITY CONTROL REPRESENTS "ONE SOUND ALTERNATIVE" TO SOME BASIC PROBLEMS IN URBAN EDUCATION. THIS ARTICLE WAS PUBLISHED IN "IRCD BULLETIN," VOLUME 2, NUMBER 5 AND VOLUME 3, NUMBER 1, WINTER 1966-1967. (AUTHOR)

IRCD BULLETIN

A BI-MONTHLY PUBLICATION

FROM THE ERIC INFORMATION RETRIEVAL CENTER ON THE DISADVANTAGED

PROJECT BEACON
FERKAUF GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF HUMANITIES AND
SOCIAL SCIENCES
55 Fifth Avenue
New York, N. Y. 10003

Volume II No. 5 and Volume III No. 1 DOUBLE ISSUE WINTER 1966-1967

ED011911 UD 03760

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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I.S. 201: AN EDUCATIONAL LANDMARK

I.S. 201 has become a landmark for reasons other than those which won it an architectural award. The conflict over one of the New York's new intermediate schools,[1] a windowless brick bastion in Harlem, has spread far beyond the walls of the ghetto. A controversy which has altered existing coalitions and polarized its principals is difficult to analyze without the resources of time and systematic study. (Despite these inherent handicaps, there have already been several perceptive reportorial accounts of the conflict.[2]) But the outlines of the controversy are sufficiently clear to attempt to determine why 201 is a landmark — or what about the goals, strategies, and tactics of its actors represent departures from previous efforts to improve the education of socially disadvantaged children.

Quality, Segregated Education: Goal, Sub-Goal, or Strategy?

While attempts to upgrade segregated ghetto schools have burgeoned since 1954, the goal of Negro activists and their white allies has been quality, integrated education. The two aims have been seen as complementary and, at least in the long run, inseparable. As Whitney Young has stated, "There can be no integration of education without quality; nor can there be any meaningful quality of education without integration." While some figures prominent in the civil rights movement have viewed the quest for quality in the ghetto as a means of making segregation palatable, the majority position, particularly among educators, has been that emphasis on one of the two interdependent goals is necessary at any given time or situation. Kenneth Clark, for example, has argued that, "given the intransigence of the white community and the impossibility of immediate integration," to seek higher standards in the ghetto is a "decision to save as many Negro children as possible now." Indeed, he maintains, along with others, that meaningful desegregation can only take place if all of the schools involved are raised to the highest standards. Improvement of ghetto schools is seen as either a prelude or concomitant of integration.

During a period when integration has been the expressed goal of many Northern school systems and compensatory efforts have been numerous, neither quality nor integration has measurably increased. On the contrary, segregation in the schools of the North has increased and achievement

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for one or both of the following reasons: because it appeared to be too deep within the ghetto to be successfully integrated; or because it was a depressing site, opposite railroad tracks and amidst rundown tenements and storefronts. The Board assured them of a creative building and of integration.

During the fall of 1965 and early months of 1966, parents of children who would attend what would be Intermediate School 201 and members of interested community groups pressed the Board for plans of integration and details of the school's program. As it became clear that the school would be segregated and they were unable to learn definite program plans, these community persons began to develop a set of proposals for the new school. In the absence of integration, they pressed for "quality, segregated education," which was to be gained through community control over such important aspects of the school's operation as staff selection, curriculum, and evaluation of the academic program. They demanded a Negro or Puerto Rican principal to supply the proper image for minority-group pupils, a well-trained, integrated teaching staff, well-stocked library, etc. They attempted during the spring and summer to obtain support from powerful allies outside the New York City Board of Education, when it appeared that the Board was not willing to negotiate seriously with them. They received no definite commitment of help from any organization or individual capable of influencing the Board's decisions. As a result of demonstration and protest by Harlem and East Harlem community groups, the Board cancelled its plans for opening the school on April 1, May 1, and June 1.

A week before the opening of school, on September 12, 1966, serious negotiations began between the Superintendent of Schools and members of the Board of Education, and what became a formal Negotiating Committee representing parents and community organizations. Since discussions began too late to reach a settlement before school opened, during the first week of school, children were assigned to the elementary schools which they had attended the previous year. Beginning Monday, September 19, children were assigned with their teachers to an old school which still had furniture. However, most of the 201 teachers, acting through the local chapter of their union (the United Federation of Teachers) refused to conduct classes in the old school.

An agreement between the Negotiating Committee and the Board was reached Monday afternoon. Basically, community representatives would be jointly responsible along with persons designated by the Board of Education for operating I.S. 201. The Board first refused, then evidently acquiesced in the demand of the Negotiating Committee that

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[1] An intermediate school serves children from fifth through eighth grades. This type of school has been developed in accordance with the New York City Board of Education's "4-4-4 plan" for reorganizing the grade structure of the school system in order to facilitate racial integration.

[2] Immediately following this discussion is a bibliography of articles dealing specifically with the conflict over I.S. 201.

A Summary of the Controversy at I.S. 201

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the appointed white principal be replaced by a Negro or Puerto Rican. It was reported that the appointee had voluntarily requested reassignment, and the ranking assistant principal, who happened to be Negro, was to serve as the acting principal. Following the Monday agreement, the Superintendent of Schools and the Chairman of the Negotiating Committee announced that a settlement had been reached, and the latter pledged to bring her child to 201 the next day.

The 201 teachers meanwhile urged the Board not to accept the appointed principal's request for a transfer and on Tuesday, September 20, picketed I.S. 201 and the Board of Education. The Board announced that the principal had withdrawn his request for reassignment, that it would honor his later request, and that the principal and teaching staff would return to I.S. 201 on Wednesday, September 21. On Wednesday, the school was picketed by a group led by the Negotiating Committee but joined by others, including representatives of Harlem CORE, SNCC, and some of the more militant nationalist groups.

Dr. Kenneth Clark, supported by several Harlem political leaders, collaborated with the Negotiating Committee on an alternative plan for operating I.S. 201. A board composed of university representatives and representatives of parents and community groups would constitute a nine-member operation board for the schools. The school system would contract with the board to run I.S. 201 and its feeders elementary schools. The Board subsequently turned down the key portion of the Clark plan, for it refused to acquiesce in "selection and transfer of personnel or authority to direct the work of the school." On October 20, the Board issued a statement in which the community group was offered an advisory role in relation to I.S. 201, and it also proposed to appoint a high-level Task Force to Advance Education in Disadvantaged Areas. The Task Force would be asked to make an interim report within thirty days and specific recommendations for action within ninety days. The Negotiating Committee refused the advisory role and denigrated the Task Force. On November 2, all members of the Local School Board resigned in protest over the Board's failure to consult them about events at I.S. 201. Commenting on the Board's proposal of October 20, the chairman of the local board stated that an advisory role implied trust, "and this community has absolutely no reason to trust the Board of Education." Four months after the Board's proposal, a task force has not been appointed.

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levels have often declined. In New York City, for example, as a result of the school's inability to counter post-war housing policies and demographic trends, the percentage of pupils attending segregated schools has increased tremendously since 1954—when the Board of Education declared integration its goal. And in Harlem, despite batteries of compensatory reading programs, the already high percentage of children reading below grade level continues to increase.

Quite consistent with the Board's pattern of perpetuating segregation while espousing integration was its selection of a site for Intermediate School 201. Despite the fact that the school was to be part of the 4-4-4 plan to promote integration it was to be located on a site within the ghetto which, in the opinion of many, precluded integration. That the new intermediate school was, in fact, segregated[3] and that the Board appeared to have no special plans for its program seemed to prove that the children of the ghetto would have neither quality nor integration.

What distinguishes the 201 group is not so much their decision to forego integration for longer than most civil rights groups have admitted is necessary, but rather their posture toward the potentialities of ghetto education. Their immediate goal is quality, segregated education. And while many persons identified with the Negro cause and with improving the education of socially disadvantaged children have, in fact, pressed for better standards in the ghetto, few have stated with conviction that a school need not be integrated to offer quality education.

Preston Wilcox, a professor at Columbia University School of Social Work, who is closely associated with the 201 group, has stated the rationale for this new position:

> ...if one believes that a segregated white school can be a "good" school then one must believe that a segregated Negro and Puerto Rican school like I.S. 201 can also be a "good" school. We must be concerned with those who are left behind even if the best conceivable school desegregation program should be implemented. And behind my concern lies the conviction that one can be black (or white or Puerto Rican), reside and attend school in an enforced ghetto, and still be successfully educated to the limits of his potentialities.

Comparable to the shift in strategy proposed by Wilcox and his associates is a suggested change of focus in the field of housing. Frances Piven and Richard Cloward, after reviewing evidence of the failure of efforts to achieve either integrated housing or more low-cost dwellings, also recommend a temporary splitting of the two goals and an emphasis on improving facilities in the slum. They conclude:

> ...if reformers can be persuaded to forget for a time the ideal of desegregation, there might be a chance for mustering political support and money for low-income housing. This would be no small achievement.

The Wilcox strategy, like that of Piven and Cloward, is not to work quietly for better slum standards pending integration but to proclaim quality, segregated education or more low-income housing as positive attainments in themselves. This stance is not, however, to be confused with the derogatory attitude toward integration associated with the advocates of Black Power. Indeed, it appears that quality, segregated education is not intended as a goal but a strategy, a positive attitude toward what seems to be the only alternative at hand, rather than resigned acceptance of what is only second best. As such it becomes a far more effective rallying cry, particularly in the ghetto, than what is inherently unequal, even if achieved.

Aside from whether quality, segregated education can be attained, one may debate the effects of this strategy on the long-term goal of integration. Is it a sub-goal or a strategy, or does quality, segregated education become a goal in itself? What the integration purists have said about any efforts to improve slum facilities can be said with far more vigor about proclaiming that the ghetto school can be as good as the white, middle-class school and about using that school, which is also segregated, as a model. Certainly, it can be argued that this slogan professes what segregationists have long maintained: that schools can be separate but equal. Also,

[3] 201 opened with an enrollment that was eighty-five percent Negro and fifteen percent Puerto Rican.

the attainment of quality, segregated education could have the effect of diminishing a major motivation for integration, that of higher quality schools for Negro children. In addition, the pursuit of this sub-goal may deplete the always limited number of activists pressing for integration. On the other hand, a significant improvement in ghetto schools — and there has been none thus far — would provide what has been considered a necessary precondition for integration: the achievement of high and comparable quality in all schools.

Aside from pragmatic questions about foregoing emphasis on integration are a number of ideological issues posed by this strategy. Two of Professor Wilcox' assumptions, for example, fly in the face of current educational philosophy. That segregated white and middle-class schools are, on the whole, characterized by better achievement levels than segregated Negro schools hardly needs to be demonstrated. But at least lip service is paid to the conviction that segregation by race, income, or social class is less than desirable. As Paul Goodman has said, "The philisophical aim of education must be to get each one out of his isolated class and into the one humanity." Thus without chiding the victims for accepting enforced segregation—and indeed white children also suffer from the prisons we bestow upon them—one must question the segregated school as a model of excellence.

It is not only assumed that segregation by race or social class is less than ideal but proclaimed by the Supreme Court that Negro segregated schools are inherently unequal. Such an argument does not rest on the fact that the staff and facilities are less adequate than those of white schools. Even if educational input were comparable, the inferior status of Negroes would, it is argued, lead to a perception damaging to the self-esteem and achievement of Negro pupils. They would believe that the schools they are forced to attend are inadequate and that they are being educated separately because they are inferior. That segregated Negro schools isolate children who are largely poor and from less advantaged educational backgrounds than most white children is thought to be another inherent inequality of segregated Negro schools. As a result, the Negro child is denied the opportunity of attending school with and being influenced by students with more educational advantages in their homes. Finally, the powerlessness of Negroes is seen as another drawback unrelated to equal educational input, for they lack the ability to influence school boards and staff concerning the education of their children. It is the conviction of the 201 group that this final factor is basic to the inequality of Negro segregated schools.

James Baldwin once observed that "the only thing white people have that black people need or should want is power." The 201 strategists maintain that if Negro parents can acquire this asset of white parents they can attain quality segregated schools. If they can gain influence over educational decisions—an advantage which integrationists have assumed is only possible in partnership with white parents or in an integrated school—they do not need whites. Only if power is viewed as the independent variable in regard to quality education can one place any confidence in the segregated ghetto school. Accordingly, the 201 group asserts that it seeks a "radical redistribution of power" in the school system. Interestingly, they are ready to accept responsibility for their children's education, evidently recognizing that the move toward self-help depends upon power or the possibility of influencing decisions in their behalf.

Community Control: Its Educational and Organizational Effects

In developing a strategy for achieving quality segregated education, the 201 activists have gone far beyond a slogan-response to the paucity and poverty of school integration. They have dramatically and effectively aroused concern for an issue basic to the education of all children, not simply those who are segregated and disadvantaged. In their analysis of the problem of ghetto schools and their proposal for overcoming the inequality of these schools they have raised and given their particular answer to a key question: who should control education?

According to the 201 strategists, parents should exercise power through a community education council which would share responsibility for the school's policy, program, and administration with representatives of the Board of Education.[4] The council would consist of representatives elected by the parents of I.S. 201 and its feeder elementary schools, representatives of community organizations selected by the parents, and a few professionals outside of the school system selected by all the others. Criteria for staff performance would be jointly developed and candidates would not be chosen if either party had "serious and sound" objections. In the Wilcox proposal there was considerable stress on the parental role in selecting a principal, a demand implicit in the concept of community control and one to play an important role in negotiations with the Board of Education. A procedure for evaluating the school program would be jointly established and, it was hoped, conducted by an independent research team. A set of proposals developed by the 201 group in the spring of 1966 suggests that the program they envisioned, as opposed to the projected shift in power relationships, resembled familiar proposals for more effective ghetto schools: a Negro or Puerto-Rican principal to raise the image of the children; an integrated staff specially trained for the school; a full supply of textbooks relevant to community interests; a well-equipped library and language laboratories; a full staff of school secretaries and teacher aides; a full complement of audio-visual equipment; a qualified and efficient staff of guidance personnel, etc.

The 201 group assumes that the community education council would guarantee Negro parents a voice in running their schools comparable to that enjoyed by white parents. David Spencer, a 201 parent and the current Chairman of the Negotiating Committee, seems to recognize that the means of exercising influence in ghetto schools need to be different from that of white, middle-class parents in their schools. In an article in the American Teacher, he remarks that "the methods that may work for a white community. . . do not effectively operate in the ghetto." No formal guarantees of influence and responsiveness to their children are necessary, for, it is argued, middle-class parents are accorded more privileges as a result of their status which is equal to or higher than that of school personnel. Teachers and administrators cannot afford to shun them; and when these informal rules are broken, ugly efforts to have a teacher or principal transferred or a rule changed must be openly waged. Since Negroes do not as a matter of course have such informal privileges, they must seek formal agreements to ensure these rights.

Actually, one may question the assumption that white parents do have as much influence, formal or informal, as the 201 group seeks. Much more needs to be known about

[4] This description of the community education council is based on an October 4 memorandum to The Church and Race Secretariat by Dorothy S. Jones, Associate for Public Education of the Office of Church and Race of the Protestant Council of the City of New York. Subsequently published in Integrated Education, it reports the results of negotiations with the Superintendent of Schools, Bernard C. Donovan, and members of the Board of Education. Mrs. Jones, who worked with the committee during the summer and fall, attended the negotiating sessions. The Wilcox proposal describes the committee slightly differently, largely because it is a plan rather than the outcome of negotiations.

the formulation of educational policy and its implementation. There is the basic question of what type of power system exists in a community and how it operates in the area of education. Particularly important is the power of the lay school board vis-a-vis that of the professional educators, which appears to vary with the size of the community. There is considerable impressionistic evidence that in large cities, the professional educators who administer the school system have weaned away much control from the lay authorities. Aside from this general tendency of the leaders of large bureaucratic organizations to make or break policy through their hold on the system of implementation, Christopher Jencks offers a political reason for the increment of professional authority. He argues that liberals, who win most community conflicts in the long run, usually support the demands of professional educators, and in so doing increase the autonomy of the latter.

As is frequently the case, the slum school is not being compared to the white school in the same city but to the small town or suburban school where parents still wield direct influence for a variety of reasons—chiefly size and the consequently greater visibility of performance and accessibility of staff, administrators, and lay leaders. The white middle-class urban parent may lack control in this sense but for the reasons already described commands a respect that Negro parents lack. Also, since the school is more attuned to the middle-class child, there is greater compatibility and less need to exert influence. Despite their failure to distinguish the types of power wielded by various groups of higher-status parents, the 201 group is on the whole correct that they need formal cessions of power to give them influence comparable to that of middle-class white parents. And, as has been the case in other efforts to improve the education of socially disadvantaged children, some of the shortcomings of the entire educational system have been dramatized. What the Negro parents of Harlem lack may also be denied to many white parents, albeit to a lesser extent and with far less damaging consequences. It is thus not so much a question of whether community control is now enjoyed by other parents but whether it is educationally sound.

If the program of the new school would probably incorporate generally accepted recommendations for improving ghetto schools, what would be the educational effect of the proposed shift in influence? One could certainly argue that the community education council is more democratic than the present system but not necessarily vital to educational innovation and certainly not prerequisite to the type of program envisioned.

Community control appears to have two major educational advantages, one, important in any neighborhood, and the other, relevant in a disadvantaged, particularly Negro area. The former concerns accountability and the latter, the psychological effect on children of their parents' increased influence. A great deal has been made of the negative self-images of disadvantaged persons, particularly Negroes, the lack of adequate role models for ghetto children, and the effect of these variables on academic achievement. Parents and community leaders who assume responsibility for their children's education and have the power to do so are more likely to provide disadvantaged children with a sense of group and, in turn, individual power. Relevant to this assumption are findings of the Coleman report, Equality of Educational Opportunity, that minority pupils, except Orientals, have far less conviction than whites that they can affect their own environment and future. When they do, however, their achievement is higher than that of whites who lack this conviction. While the report found that Negroes in schools with higher proportions of whites have a greater sense of control, the exercise of power in a Negro school may also affect this variable. Further support for the educational effect of increased power among ghetto residents comes from Professor Dan Dodson of New York University, who has long been concerned with this issue. He maintains that such factors as apathy, resignation, and low aspiration levels would "take care of themselves" if we could "help these groups find leverages to power." He views this factor as crucial to the inefficiency of present educational and other services for these groups: "We have not been willing to do things with people for this would have meant we would have to share power with them."

The 201 group has been quite concerned with the concept of accountability. They have observed that the school system can fail to educate large numbers of children with impunity. The community has little control over the performance of the school; in fact, when their children do not learn, they rather than the professional educators are blamed. Their desire to have an objective, hopefully annual, evaluation stems from their interest in assessing the educational results and developing standards by which the school can be held accountable for its record. With control over staff selection and evaluation, they could, in effect, say that if staff performance does not meet criteria which they have helped to establish, contracts would not be renewed. In theory, the demands motivate staff to perform well or others who can do the task more efficiently will replace them.

There is the potential for accountability in the small system and in the private school where support, i.e., tuition, can be withdrawn when students fail to learn or the school otherwise does not meet standards of excellence. It is interesting to note that Christopher Jencks has proposed a means of assuring accountability to the majority of parents, not just the privileged few. He suggests either that needy parents be provided with tuition grants to send their chidren to approved private schools if they wish or that public agencies begin contracting with private groups to manage some schools. In addition to school's being required to educate or lose support, Jencks envisions that such a plan would provide genuine choice of education for all. One could elect the type of education he felt desirable for his child—co-ed, progressive, private, or public. (Some parents might choose to continue with the public school which itself would have to compete with other schools for the large majority of children.) In this respect, the Jencks proposal has an important advantage over the 201 approach in which there would be decentralization but no diversity for the individual. In the latter proposal one would have to accept the program established by his neighborhood representatives as he now must accept the offering of the centralized system.

In attempting to understand the implications of the 201 version of local community control, it seems important to distinguish between accountability in which the school is responsible to the community for results and the direct intervention of parents in the development and execution of educational policy. Robert Dentler, for example, makes the point that:

> One measure of quality in private education has long been the degree to which the headmaster, dean, or professor, can introduce instruction of benefit to the student but potentially opposed by the party paying tuition.

Parents, as he notes, do not interfere with the educational program, but he fails to recognize that they can and sometimes do hold the school accountable for results—whether a high percentage of students is accepted to prestigious colleges, etc. One may also infer from the subsequent remarks of Dentler that he opposes a principal's accountability to parents but not to lay members of the Board of Education. It would thus seem that the status of the laymen to whom professional educators are accountable may be more important than the principle itself.

The important question raised by Dentler and others is the extent to which parental control will undermine the positive attributes of professionalism. It is, of course, to be expected that their increased role will be resented by educators. As Howard Becker has concluded after studying the relationship between teachers and parents in Chicago public schools:

> The teachers' fear...is that intrusion by the parents, even on legitimate grounds, will damage their authority position and make them subject to forms of control that are, for them, illegitimate—control by outsiders. (italics mine)

The question is not then whether professional educators will claim to be compromised but whether professional knowledge, skill, and independence will be flouted. But, judging from achievement scores, what knowledge and skill have the professional educators in Harlem shown? The Coleman Report provides some data relevant to these concerns, for it found that while the school variables it observed do not significantly influence variations in achievement among all groups of children in the U. S. the schools' impact is crucial in the ghetto. For the academic achievement of the average minority or disadvantaged child, according to the Report, not only suffers more than that of the average white child as a result of poor quality schools but also responds more favorably to improvements in school facilities, curriculums, and teachers than that of his more privileged counterpart.

In addition to whether professional skill and knowledge will be compromised, there is the issue of independence. To the point that professional control means freedom from parental pressure, one may retort, how free of bureaucratic control have educators been? It is thus not so much a matter of what is philosophically sound but rather, as the 201 group maintains, that professionals have forfeited the opportunity to exercise their function independently.

Because the demands for community control at I.S. 201 have been at least temporarily denied, it is difficult to anticipate the extent to which community persons will rely on competent professionals. It is appropriate to recognize, as many critics have, that although parents are certain to be committed to their children's education, they are not necessarily the best judges of what is educationally sound. The distinction is often made between a client's desire and need as determined by a professional. There are, however, a number of indications that the 201 group has every intention of developing a program of academic excellence—which should be synonymous with a professional program. Contrary to a critic like Joe L. Rempson, who has confused responsiveness to the community with a lowering of standards, every statement of the 201 group indicates that they desire a highly trained staff. They want a program that will raise achievement levels, and they they are weary of teachers who have the very unprofessional attitude that their children cannot learn. Also, the committee has given evidence of working with and seeking the advice of those professionals who are concerned with the community. It should be remembered that "non-school-system professionals" were to be included on the council. Not only was the committee continuously advised by several professionals in the field of education and social welfare, but after the Board rejected their demands, the 201 group accepted the assistance of Dr. Kenneth Clark. With him they developed a plan whereby the Board of Education would delegate responsibility for running the school to a board composed of representatives of a university, and parents and community groups. Working with those professionals who are compatible in the sense that they can achieve desirable educational results does not necesarily mean that the intention is to compromise professionals. These criteria are, after all, the bases on which school staff are hired by a school board. Educators who meet criteria of excellence would no doubt command sufficient respect to regain the independence which the community thinks has been forfeited.

That some of our argument in support of community control is based on the particular intentions of the 201 group would seem to confirm the objections of critics. Assuming appropriately that abdicating to one community group would lead other communities to demand and acquire such control, Albert Shanker, President of the United Federation of Teachers (UFT), has argued that while the 201 group may have desirable educational goals another community may not. It is important to understand the implications of such a position as well as to recognize certain built-in assurances that professional standards would be maintained.

Shanker's position implies that lay representatives of a larger unit, New York City, are more likely to ensure professional standards than those of a smaller neighborhood like Harlem. Actually, as we earlier pointed out what the large unit inevitably leads to is professional control and the erosion even of centralized lay authority. Uniform practices over a large area may be assumed under the present system, but they are not necessarily high standards nor characterized by responsiveness to local needs.

What of the worst possible consequences envisioned by the opponents of such a scheme: that parents such as those who have taken their children out of the public schools to avoid integration would win control of the public schools in their area? First, it should be noted that, if not under public auspices, such parents, if they are sufficiently numerous and influential among their neighbors, do open schools consistent with their philosophy. However, such groups are more likely to comply with professional standards, if their schools are public, for the funding agencies, as we shall subsequently indicate, create powerful pressures toward such conformity. But more to the point, why in a large city should parents have any less right to be wrong than in smaller towns or suburban communities? Is a reliance on the experts really so much more conducive to excellence than control by the majority of the people in what is certainly a more democratic system?

Both the nature of the plan for community control and the external pressures toward conformity guarantee that professionalism will be well represented, regardless of the educational philosophies of the parents. First, representatives of the Board of Education have joint authority over school operations. And thus while the community has veto power over important decisions, the professional educators do too. The built-in guarantees pertain to the continuing need of the school to meet accreditation standards established by the state and the pressures of Federal, state, and local funding agencies. The latter could include both the setting of professional standards and the related denial of support to groups engaged in discriminatory practices or espousing racist philosophies. Finally, there is a limit imposed, particularly in poor communities, by the factor of time or the extent to which community persons are available to infringe on day-to-day implementation of school policy by professionals.

A criticism also related to the consequences of generalizing the experiment is that it would effect fragmentation rather than desirable decentralization. Dentler fears the monitoring of New York City's schools by 845 communities, the number of schools in the system. Actually, he has exaggerated considerably, since the 201 group proposed that the unit be the intermediate school and its feeder schools. There would thus be 142 local units. And lest one conclude that this is an unwieldy number, it should be noted that the 201 complex would serve a neighborhood of approximately 30,000 people, a population larger than many

American suburbs and towns, which operate independent school systems. Finally, to dangle the specter of extreme fragmentation is to forget that the 201 group was proposing a solution for the school with which they were concerned, and it is simply unfair to assume what this writer's conversations with group members disputed—that they would oppose larger units that still provide the safeguards of a small community.

A unit of authority larger than that of an intermediate school complex but smaller than that of the present city-wide body is proposed by Joe L. Rempson of the Center for Urban Education. Unfortunately, Mr. Rempson's proposal is pervaded by such pejorative and unwarranted attitudes towards the aspirations and resources of community residents that it is difficult to evaluate his suggestions regarding formal structure objectively. He proposes that members of local school boards be elected by residents of their district rather than selected by the Board of Education and that the district superintendent, who would serve at the discretion of the local board, be given considerable authority, notably the appointment of principals and teachers. Rempson goes much further in the direction of community control than a recent draft proposal by the Board's Special Committee on Decentralization. The latter group tends to allow some decentralization of professional authority but little transfer of control to local laymen from either a central staff or lay board. Neither the draft proposal nor recommendations of the Women's City Club of New York, which has made two detailed studies of local school boards, suggests that members of the local units be elected by the community rather than selected by the Board. And the former, while it directs the district superintendent to consult the local board regarding staff appointments, leaves the authority for selection and transfer of personnel with the Superintendent of Schools. While Rempson does favor decentralization of lay as well as professional authority, he suggests that a School-Community Committee in each school be an advisory body. Thus the suggested unit of control may be too large to allow urban dwellers, particularly the disadvantaged, a sense of influence over their school's operation, for there are thirty local school districts in New York City, each serving approximately twenty-five or thirty grade and intermediate schools and four or five high schools.

The Viability of the New Strategies

That the 201 proposal has been turned down by the Board of Education leads to a consideration of why it was rejected. Does loss result from its proponents' tactical errors or from their temporary but not inherent weakness? Or are the natural adversaries of such a redistribution of power sufficiently strong and numerous to have managed its defeat with a reasonable show of political adroitness, regardless of the skill of the 201 organizers? A strategy is, after all, to be evaluated partly on whether it can be viable.

During the spring and summer of 1966, when it became clear that the Board of Education would not negotiate seriously with them, the 201 group sought powerful allies outside their community. They presented their problems and proposals to the Mayor and received no hint of support. (Actually, the Mayor used the Board's vulnerability during the 201 crisis to strengthen his position that he as the elected head of the city government should have more control over the "non-political," appointed Board of Education.) The 201 committee was denied an appointment with State Commissioner of Education, James E. Allen, Jr., on the basis that he is unable to intervene in New York City without a request from the Board of Education. They met with U.S. Commissioner of Education, Harold Howe II, and found him sympathetic but, he stated, limited in his power to influence local decisions.

Despite their hope of securing powerful allies, the 201 group made only perfunctory efforts to gain the support of nongovernmental organizations known to have direct influence over educational policy or to be interested in better schools. The powerful United Federation of Teachers, which has generally supported civil rights activities and school improvements which do not conflict with its vital interests, was not viewed as a potential ally. Nor were the educational pressure groups—the extent of whose influence is not known—considered possible partners in a coalition with the 201 group. These groups would not, of course, be opposed to reduction of the power of the Board of Education, providing that they stood to increase their own influence. But, on the contrary, the 201 plan presaged a host of new uncertain power blocs on the local level for groups like the United Parents Association and the Public Education Association, whose influence rests on well-cultivated relationships with the central authorities in the school system.

A teachers' union was also bound to oppose community control no matter how the plan was presented to it. As suggested earlier, teachers, and in turn, the organizations that represent them, resist any increase in lay authority. As an organization of civil service bureaucrats rather than of teachers per se, the teachers' union would also oppose community control. For example, in their study of New York City government, Sayre and Kaufman note the tendency of these organizations to share with other groups the "desire to be self-directing, self-sufficient, and autonomous." A primary goal of gaining control over the personnel system of the agency in which members are employed was also observed. And a proposal which not only violated the union's contract with the Board but gave groups of local citizens control over important aspects of the personnel process was a blow to the vital interests of the organization. It is interesting to consider criticisms of the parents for not cultivating the teachers' group in view of these considerations. Professor Sol Gordon, Director of Project Beacon, Yeshiva University and Mr. Shanker, himself, have urged a coalition of teachers and parents. Dr. Gordon writes, "No bureaucratic educational establishment will find itself more powerful than such a coalition." Powerful, yes, but at the cost of the basic demand of the parents—to make the professional staff, teachers, as well as their supervisors, accountable to the local community.

When it seemed to the parents that they would not have sufficient outside support,[5] they appear to have adopted the alternative strategy to coalition, that of the power-oriented pressure group. The decision to press their demands for a Negro principal after a white principal had been appointed had the effect of alienating many white liberals. The latter, however, probably lacked organizational strength sufficient to counteract the UFT in the absence of the other parties who had refused to actively support the parents. Whether the Negro principalship demand was negotiable is questionable as the following discussion will indicate. But pressing for a Negro principal and the removal of the white appointee had the effect of increasing strength where they now needed it most—in the ghetto.

Few would have been angered had the parents simply argued that a Negro principal would be desirable, as they did in their earlier proposal. According to data collected in 1963 and the basis of current recommendations on personnel policy, there were only three Negro principals in 844 New York City schools. This report, Teacher Mobility in New York City, which was prepared by Daniel Griffiths and his associates at the New York University School of

[5]Only two city-wide organizations supported the 201 group: the Protestant Council of the City of New York and EQUAL, a recently established organization of parents seeking quality, integrated education.

Education, concludes: "Negro members of the New York City Public Schools have been less mobile than others... hierarchically in the system's professional ladder." The need to provide Negro children with more examples of leadership by members of their race is also relatively uncontroversial.

The white appointee, Mr. Stanley Lisser, was difficult to cast as villain. Lacking the charisma of principals they admired, and defining the community role of the school more narrowly than the protestors, Mr. Lisser probably had scant disagreement with them over the school's program. He has, in fact, an impressive record of interest and achievement in the teaching of Negro history. That they had not participated in his selection seems to have been one of Mr. Lisser's major deficiencies. Such an interpretation is suggested by their resentment of the Board's name for I.S. 201: the Arthur C. Schomburg School. But it would have been hard to find a name more appropriate for a school where Negroes would receive proper respect and where the achievements of minority groups would be stressed.

That the issue is far more complex than a demand for the removal of a white principal and his replacement by a Negro is suggested by the Wilcox proposal. Community selection of the principal, it should be recalled was considered critical to the concept of community control. And although Wilcox is thoroughly identified with the demand for a Negro principal, the fact of community selection was stressed and his race not mentioned. Wilcox and his 201 associates viewed the principal as the key figure in the school; unless he was their man, they would have scant influence over the school's operation. Their perception of the principal's importance is substantiated by the National Principalship Study where it was found that in lower socio-economic areas the principal could measurably affect teachers' performances and, in turn, student achievement. Yet, it should be noted that the areas in which Mr. Lisser's administrative talents would have been compatible with the protest group--planning generally for the school, getting teachers to use new educational methods, and attracting able people to the school staff—were more highly correlated with the teachers' performance (and, in turn, with achievement) than those associated with skill in school-community relations. Given their appropriate stress on the principal's importance, to begin the community council with a Board-imposed principal was to start without community control. On the other hand, it could be argued that if community control were assured and the principal were reasonably attuned to the community council, it would not be absolutely necessary for the group to have selected him. However, if selection and control are ever inseparable, they seem not to have been in this instance. Although earlier the Board had accepted and the community rejected control without Mr. Lisser's removal, in the showdown, the Board seems to have rejected both demands simultaneously. The Superintendent of Schools failed to inform the group that Mr. Lisser's "request" for a transfer had been withdrawn. The group was affronted to first hear this announcement through the news media and must have felt that they were hardly being treated as a partner by the Board. It is therefore hard to determine whether the group would have settled for community control and Mr. Lisser, since ultimately they were not given that choice. And finally, while incendiary during the crisis, the principalship demand was probably less controversial in the long run than the issue of community control. For example, the UFT, while maintaining its stand against community control, has subsequently urged that principals be chosen not by the present "merit system" but elected by the teachers in the school.

An additional tactical reason for the principalship stand is offered by Rasa Gustaitis in his Reporter article. He maintains that the group was not so much interested in a Negro principal as they were in having a concrete sign of victory, particularly since it would take time to set up the council. Such an interpretation seems to be consistent with the view that the selection of the principal by the community is not so important as his compatibility and accountability to the community.

Many white liberals were not only opposed to sizeable intrusion on the influence of professional educators but were more offended by the principalship demand. That Mr. Lisser was Jewish may have seemed another sign of simmering anti-Semitism among more militant Negroes. As a result, the attempt to remove Mr. Lisser affronted members of the Jewish community which has been a consistent civil rights ally of Negroes.

White persons cheered when Mrs. Beryl Banfield, the ranking assistant principal at 201, and a Negro, refused to fill the temporary vacancy which would have been left had Mr. Lisser gone through with his request for a transfer. The liberal community applauded her remark, "I refuse to be chosen on the basis of color, not competence." But those who deemed her a heroine were evidently unaware of several factors which render her rhetoric rather vacuous. First of all, she was not being chosen to fill the position but to serve temporarily. Actually, she would not have been acceptable to the group because, with the image problem in mind, they sought a Negro male. It should also be noted that in the ghetto where children seldom see institutional leaders of their own group, a person of their own color or ethnic group is more desirable than an outsider of comparable competence. And the Negotiating Committee was not seeking an incompetent—unless it be assumed that a Negro cannot be a capable principal. Mrs. Banfield's statement also implies that the present system of choosing supervisory personnel in the Board of Education emphasizes competence. Yet, the Griffiths recommendations urge the abolition of the current mechanism for upgrading, the Board of Examiners, which not only discriminates, however subtly, against Negroes, but fails to establish criteria consonant with competence. Finally, the rather simplistic juxtaposition of color vs. competence is irrelevant to the pressure-group tactics which underlay the mobility of all other American minority groups. To apply more stringent codes of ethics to today's have-nots is to ask them to remain second-class citizens.

The rather open resentment by some Negroes of Jewish hegemony over school principalships in New York City is not atypical of other situations in which disadvantaged groups find their mobility blocked by other groups' control over institutional leadership. It is important in these instances to distinguish between the ascent to leadership and its maintenance. The present position of Jews in New York City schools is partly the result of their entry into the system during the Depression when it offered college graduates higher wages and greater security than other employers. Since numerical strength is not the sole factor influencing a group's mobility in an institution, it is likely that an "ethnic strategy" may have been employed to gain a foothold in administrative positions. However, the exclusion of Negroes from principalships probably results from the tendency of the present leadership to establish criteria for and to favor candidates more like themselves in administrative style and orientation than are most Negro aspirants. The effect, though not the motivation, is discriminatory.

Although the 201 group lost the support of most white liberals, the committee's stand has not only stirred one Harlem neighborhood but ghettos throughout the city. The group's militant stance during the controversy and subsequent refusal to consider the Board's counter offer of a community committee with advisory status has been an antidote to compromises that have resulted in a 201. It is absolutely necessary for such a group to increase its own solidarity, necessarily neglected during the crisis, and

to generalize its neighborhood-protest strategy. Otherwise, a city-wide organization like the UFT will always defeat it, the Board preferring a boycott at one school to a shutdown at all. Plans are underway to assure support of the majority of parents at 201, particularly since the committee's representativeness was questioned by opponents during the crisis. Also, the action of another neighborhood organization has since strengthened the Negotiating Committee's position, particularly its charge that the Board disdains the local community. In an unprecendented move, all members of the local school board resigned in protest over the Board's failure to consult them concerning the 201 situation. That the group designated by the Board to advise it about local concerns was ignored lends weight to the argument for formal guarantees of influence. There are also some indications that the committee's strategy and tactics have already spurred activities of other neighborhood groups. In at least two instances, one where the example of 201 was openly acknowledged, communities have fought the Board on the issue of meaningful community participation in staff selection and school policy. More indicative of unified protests, however, was the creation of the rump board of education in which 201 leaders played a key role. The Board's budget hearings were disrupted when a "grass roots" person could not gain a place on the agenda. A three-day sit-in in the Board's Chambers was held by the rump group which conducted its own hearings. Not only were many ghetto groups represented in the dramatic demonstration that this Board is not their board, but, more significantly, the rump chairman was Rev. Milton Galamison, the leader of the school boycotts for integration.

One Response to the New Strategies

The pursuit of quality, segregated education, even as a subgoal or strategy, is hardly as inspiring as that of quality, integrated education. The former seeks, if only in the short run, to attain for the minorities—what the majority has. At least temporarily it reinforces separation by social class, race, and ethnic group, and seems to emulate the isolation which the majority calls privilege. Instead of an integrated movement, it is associated with organization along racial and ethnic lines, consciously capitalizing on the potential solidarity of the ghetto. Integration, on the other hand, holds out something to both the majority and the minority, for both will become less parochial. And while the strategy of community control is attractive not only for the disadvantaged but for the urban middle classes as well, its basic drawback is its organization along neighborhood lines which, given housing patterns, will reflect segregation by race, ethnic group, and social class. If the powerful centralized school system has been unable to counter the segregation of neighborhoods, the increased influence of local community groups will probably be inimical to such an effort.

Simply to state one's preference for integration and some type of organization that would provide accountability to urban parents is to ignore the limited alternatives, particularly in the ghetto. One would like to agree with Frank Riessman that disillusionment is premature and even damaging to the very real prospects for increased school integration. One also hopes that the Rustin-Randolph strategy of coalition with powerful groups of white liberals can be more politically productive for the Negro masses than past protest. The Jencks' proposal, which on the surface appears to provide accountability and individual choice, including the opportunity to opt integration, deserves careful consideration, particularly from the standpoint of feasability. The Rempson plan which provides more local control than presently exists, but probably not close enough to the "grass roots," also deserves further study. In any case, one is certainly inclined to agree with the 201 group that the present strategies for achieving integration have thus far produced neither quality nor integration for the ghetto poor, and that their approach has considerable potential not only for raising ghetto standards but for reforming the structure of the urban school system as well.

Integration must remain an important national goal if we are ever to reduce the effects of our greatest blight. But we may need to improve the ability of the schools to equalize opportunity or to make an educational impact independent of the social origins of pupils before they can be expected to handle integration with sensitivity and success. A close examination the 201 controversy leads to a respect not only for the new strategies, but for the resilience which has turned disappointment into a daring, though politically dangerous, offensive. No single approach is a panacea or without drawbacks, but the strategies which have emerged from a bitter controversy in a Harlem school represent one sound alternative to some basic problems in urban education.

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I. S. 201 Issues and Implications

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